South Railroad Street Park

Master Plan

General Management Plan
and
Conceptual Development Plan

Fairfax County Park Authority
Approved September 27, 2006

FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY
SOUTH RAILROAD STREET PARK

General Management Plan
and Conceptual Development Plan

PARK AUTHORITY BOARD

Harold L. Strickland, Chairman, Sully District
Joanne E. Malone, Vice Chairman, Providence District
Frank S. Vajda, Secretary-Treasurer, Mason District
Gilbert S. McCutcheon, Mt. Vernon District
Winifred S. Shapiro, Braddock District
Kenneth G. Feng, Springfield District
Kevin J. Fay, Dranesville District
Edward R. Batten, Lee District
Georgette Kohler, At-Large
George D. Lovelace, At-Large
Harrison A. Glasgow, At-Large
William G. Bouie, Hunter Mill District

SENIOR STAFF

Michael A. Kane, Director
Timothy K. White, Chief Operating Officer
Lynn S. Tadlock, Director, Planning & Development Division
Charles Bittenbring, Director, Park Services Division
Miriam C. Morrison, Director, Administration Division
Cindy Messinger, Director, Resource Management Division
Todd Johnson, Director, Park Operations
Judith Pedersen, Public Information Officer

PROJECT TEAM

Sandy Stallman, Branch Manager, Park Planning Branch
Sarah Ridgely, Project Manager, Park Planning Branch
James P. "Irish" Grandfield, Senior Park Planner, Park Planning Branch
Manjula Nandiraju, Park Planner, Park Planning Branch
Diane Probus, Park Planner, Park Planning Branch
Jenny Pate, Trails Coordinator, Planning and Development Division
Meghan Fellows, Naturalist, Natural Resource Protection Section
Rich Sacchi, Archaeologist, Resource Management Division
John Hopkins, Park Operations Division

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

The cover image shows section B of the park, where a majority of the active recreation is planned.

Introduction

I. Purpose and Description of Plan

The purpose of the master plan is to create a long-range vision for the site. During the planning process, the site is considered in the context of the surrounding neighborhood and as one park of many within the Fairfax County Park Authority system. When approved, this document will serve as a useful long-term decision making tool for future planning on the site and should be referred to before any planning and design projects are initiated.

The master plan document consists of three parts—Background and Existing Conditions, the General Management Plan, and the Conceptual Development Plan. The background information serves as the basis for decision making. The General Management Plan and Conceptual Development Plan describe how to best protect park resources, provide quality visitor experiences, and serve as a blueprint for future park development. The purpose of the document is to serve as a guide for all future planning and programming.

The purpose of the General Management Plan (GMP) is to guide management of resources, visitor use, and general development of the park. The GMP describes existing conditions and constraints, details the desired visitor experience, and identifies "management zones." General Management Plans are meant to be flexible to accommodate the changing needs of park visitors. Uses are described in general terms, so that as visitor needs change, the uses provided can change accordingly.

The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) describes the planned park elements, identifies design concerns, and illustrates the general location of the recommended facilities based on the guidance of the General Management Plan.

II. Public Process

On April 20, 2006, the Park Authority held a community meeting to initiate the park planning process and to solicit community desires. The information gathered at the session was used in combination with site analysis research to develop design alternatives for park use and development. A draft master plan was developed based on public input provided throughout the process as well as local park and recreation needs. A public hearing was then held on July 24, 2006. The plan was revised following the public hearing and was approved by the Park Authority Board on September 27, 2006.

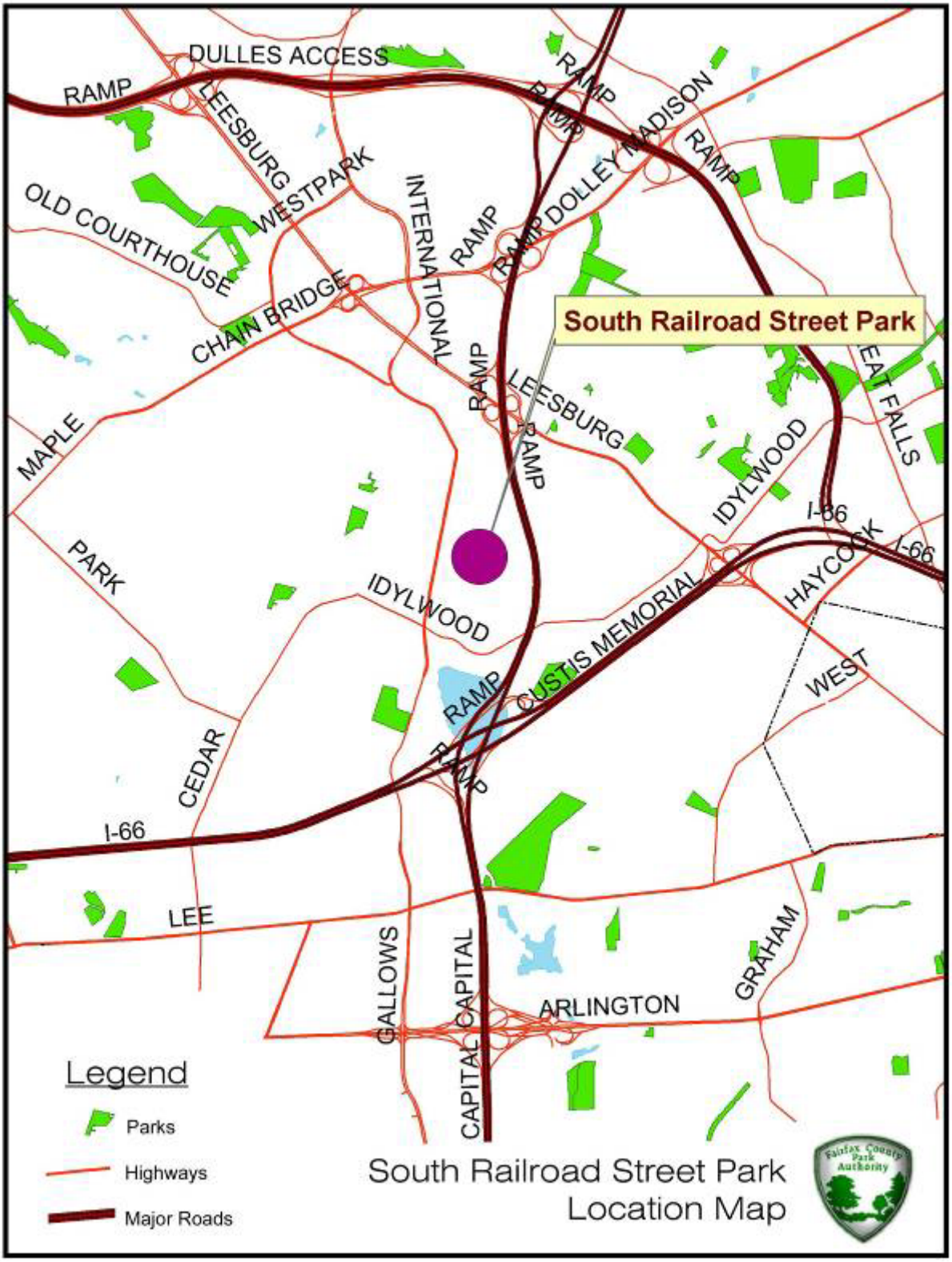

Figure 1: Location Map

Part One: Background and Existing Conditions

I. Park Description & Significance

A. Location & General Description

South Railroad Street Park is a 2.04-acre linear park located along Railroad Street between Gallows Road and Morgan Lane (see *Figure 1 – Location Map* on page 2). The park is owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority and is designated as a Local Park.

The property includes former road and railroad right-of-way areas in Tax Map 39-4((29)) B; 39-4((52)) B, C1, C2, C3, D, and portions of Tax Map 39-4((50)) B, C, D, E, in Dunn Loring (see *Figure 4 – Property Map* on page 5). The site is located in the Providence Supervisory District and Vienna Planning District. The site has a mixture of woodlands and grassed areas. There is an existing path, a portion of sidewalk, and grading remnants from the former electric railroad line. Several underground utilities including water, storm sewer and sewer lines are also located within the site.

Figure 2: Photo of South Railroad Street

B. Administrative History of the Site

Most of the site was originally an electric railroad bed that was later acquired by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Parcels 39-4((29)) B; 39-4((52)) B, C1, C2, D of the site were dedicated to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2001 as part of the Morgan Chase residential development. The Board of Supervisors and adjacent home owners acquired additional portions of abandoned right-of-way from VDOT. These parcels were pieced together and dedicated to Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) in 2005 to create the park site.

C. Park Classification

South Railroad Street Park is designated as a Local Park in the County's park classification system. Local parks offer a variety of active and/or passive recreation opportunities in close proximity to County residents and employment centers. Areas designated for natural and/or cultural resource protection may also be included within these parks.

Local parks primarily provide facilities for active or passive recreation, or both; areas for scheduled and unscheduled recreation activities and social gathering places; and serve

residential, employment and mixed-use centers. In suburban settings, park size will typically be at least two and one-half acres and less than 50 acres, but some local parks may range up to 75 acres. In urban areas, park size is typically less than five acres and often less than one-half acre. Visits to local parks will typically be less than two hours.

The character of local parks may vary depending on their location within the County. In residential settings, local parks will generally be larger than in urban parts of the County. Local parks offer open space to those with little or no yards. Typical facilities may include open play areas, playgrounds, courts, athletic fields, game areas, trails, trail connections, natural areas,

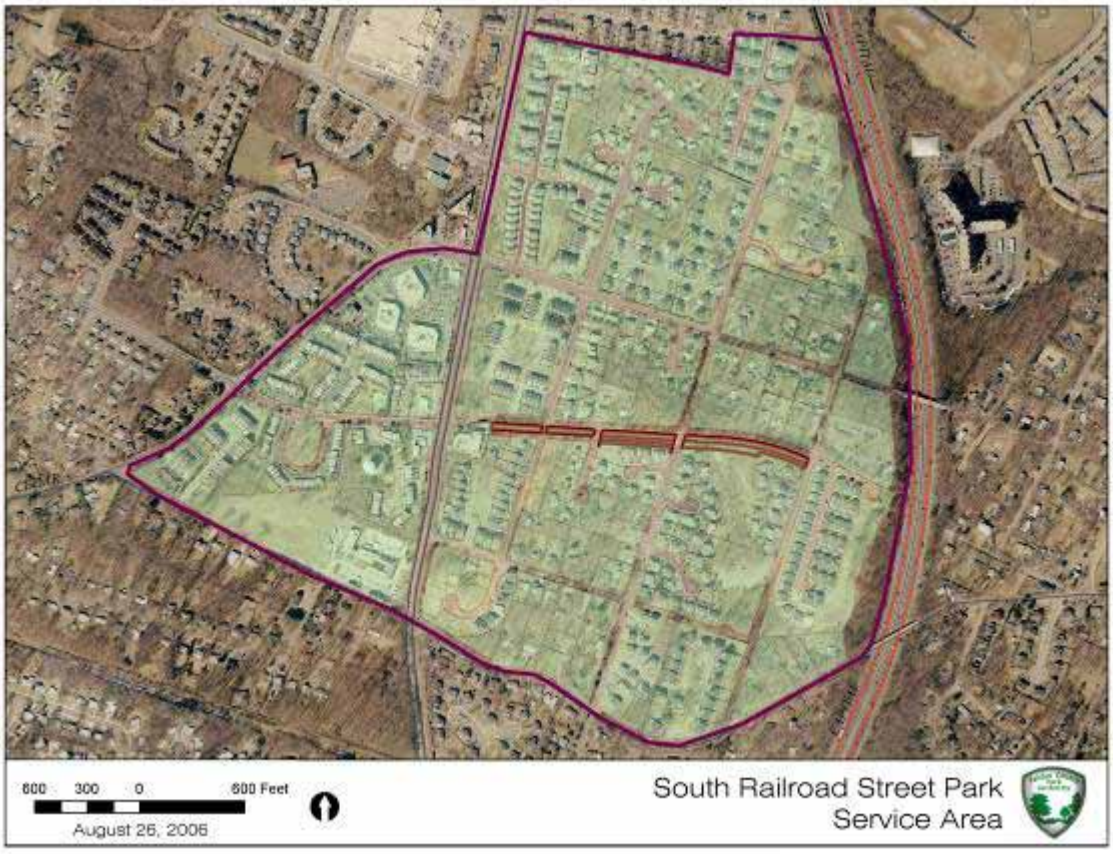

Figure 3: Service Area Map

picnic facilities and facility lighting. In a suburban setting and depending on the park size and facilities, the local park service area may be up to 3 miles (see *Figure 3 – Service Area Map* on page 4).

The user experience at local parks may be a casual and informal encounter, geared toward social interaction, play and outdoor enjoyment, or may be more structured to support organized sports and park programs. Collocation of a mix of park uses and facilities that support both informal and structured activities is increasingly necessary to meet the County's diverse and varied recreation and leisure needs where available land is diminishing. To the extent possible, facilities will be planned so that areas that address different needs are compatible.

Figure 4: Property Map

D. Park Purpose

Park purpose statements are intended to guide decision making regarding all plan recommendations, resource allocation, and management issues. As park development progresses from conceptual master planning to site specific design, decisions can be continually tested against the park purpose for appropriateness. If a proposed use conflicts with any one of the purposes listed, it will be considered an incompatible use. By establishing park purposes, future plans can remain flexible, as legislative and regulatory requirements and park user preferences change. Park significance statements capture the attributes that make the park valuable and important to the community and within the park system. Like park purpose statements, the significance of a park may shift over time in response to the surrounding context or user needs and desires. The purpose of South Railroad Street Park is three-fold:

E. Park & Recreation Needs

The need for parkland and recreation facilities is determined through long range planning efforts. The Park Authority tracks park facilities and land inventories, recreation and leisure trends, surveys citizen demand and compares itself to peer jurisdictions to determine reasonable need. The most recent Needs Assessment was completed in 2004.

South Railroad Street Park is located within the Vienna Planning District. Based on the adopted service level standards, this District has a current deficiency of 66 acres of local parkland, nine rectangle fields, 11 multi-use courts, one playground and two youth diamond fields and one adult softball field. As the population grows in the future, these deficiencies will increase. Due to the relatively small area of this park, opportunities are limited to meet many of the deficiencies on this site.

Figure 5: Electric train, circa 1935

F. Relationship to Park Authority Mission

The Park Authority Strategic Plan is the guiding document to focus resources on the most critical work of the agency. As identified in the Strategic Plan, the dual goals of the Park Authority mission are to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources and to provide quality recreational services and facilities. The recommendations established in the South Railroad Street Park Master Plan will further the Park Authority's mission.

Figure 6: Park Sections Map

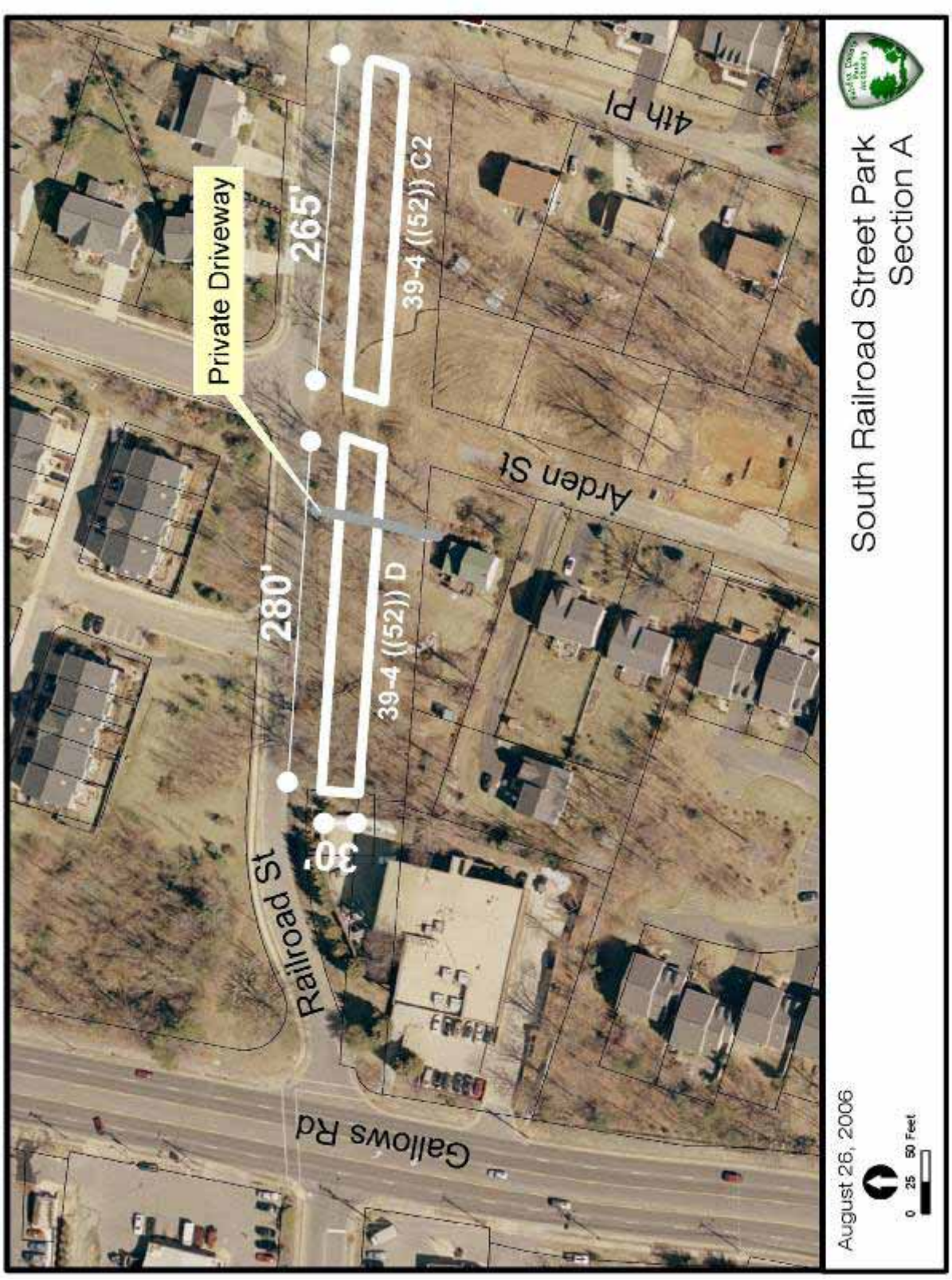

Figure 7: Parcel Section A Map

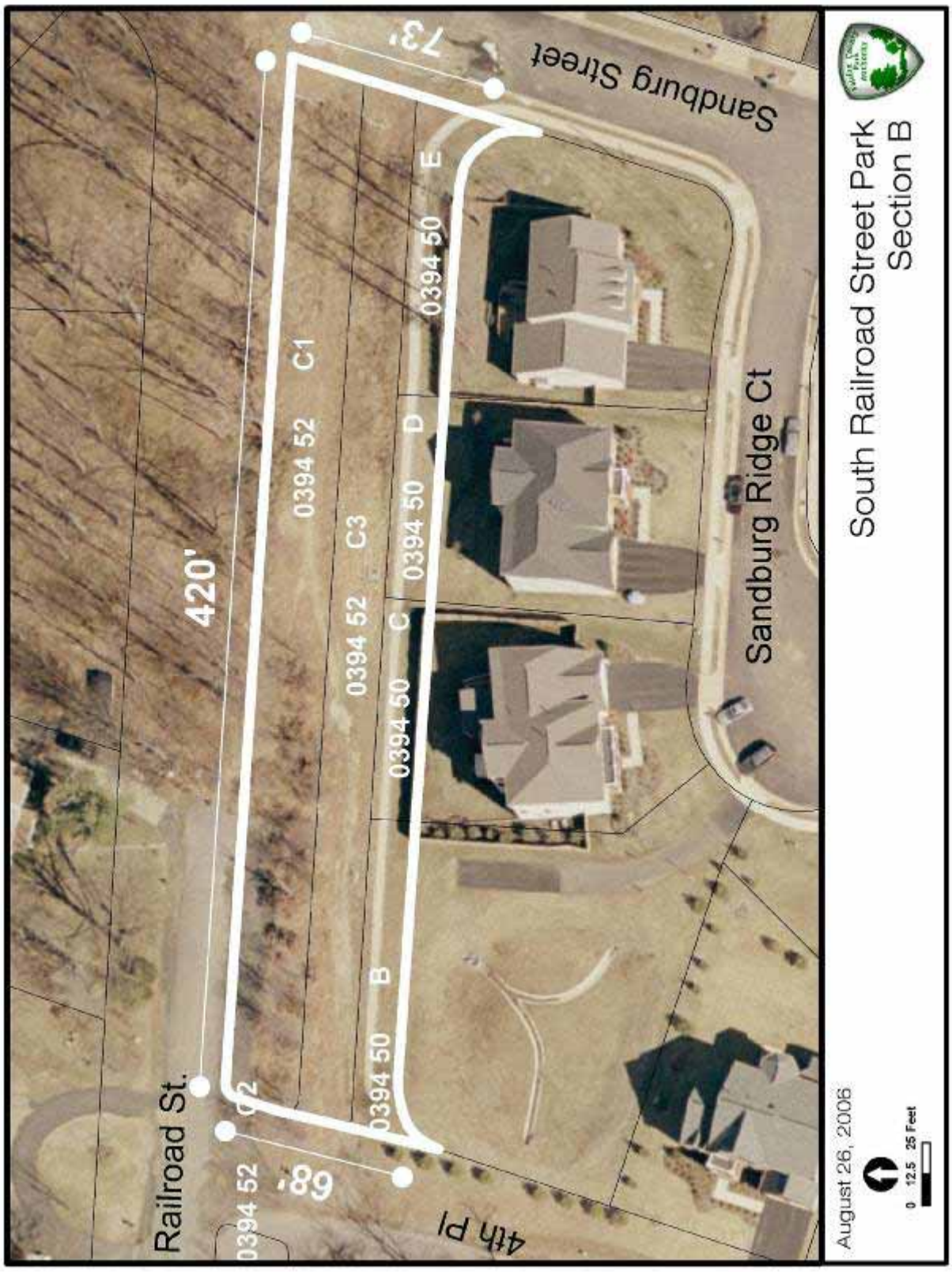

Figure 8: Parcel Section B Map

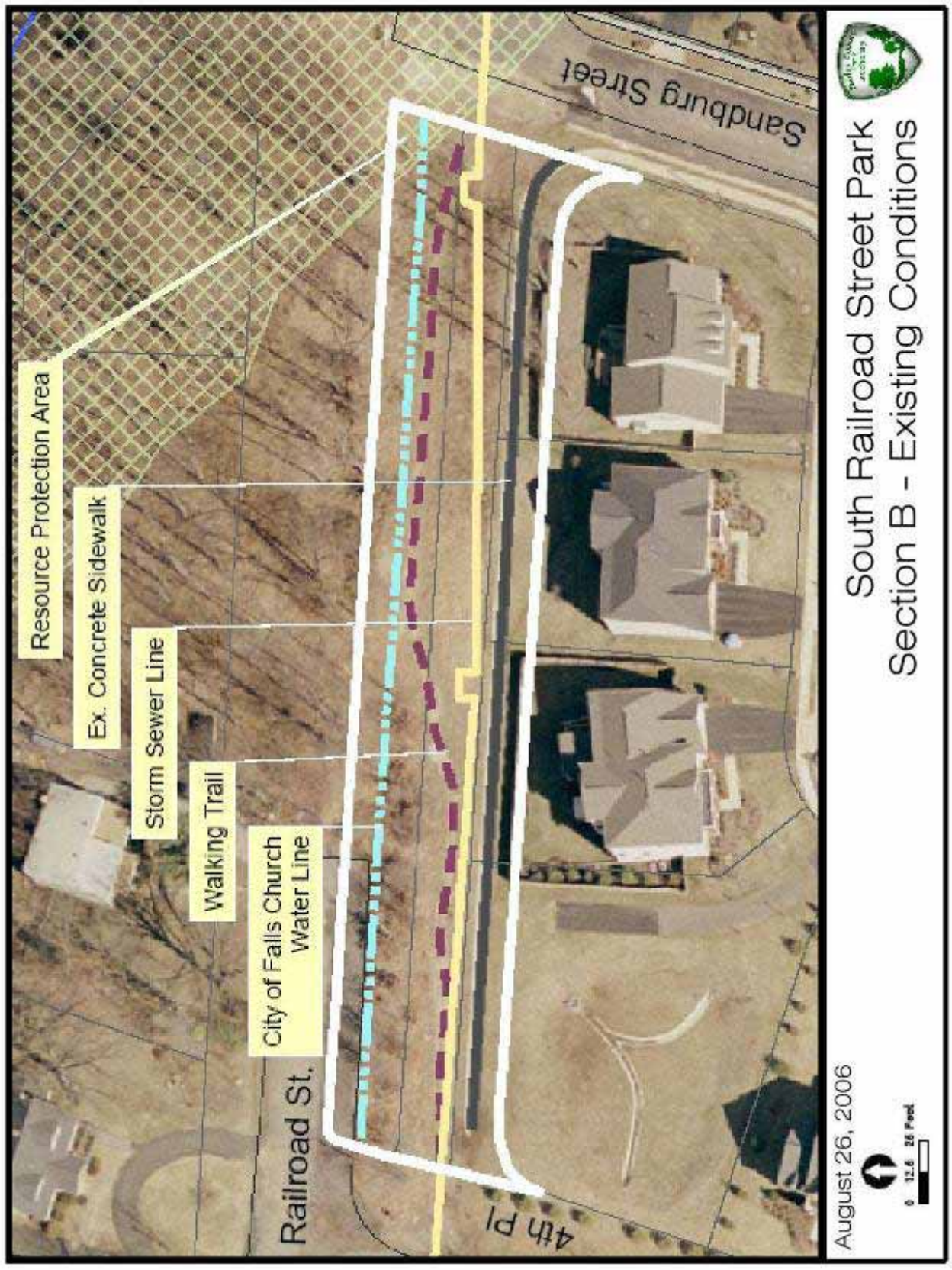

Figure 9: Parcel Section B – Existing Conditions Map

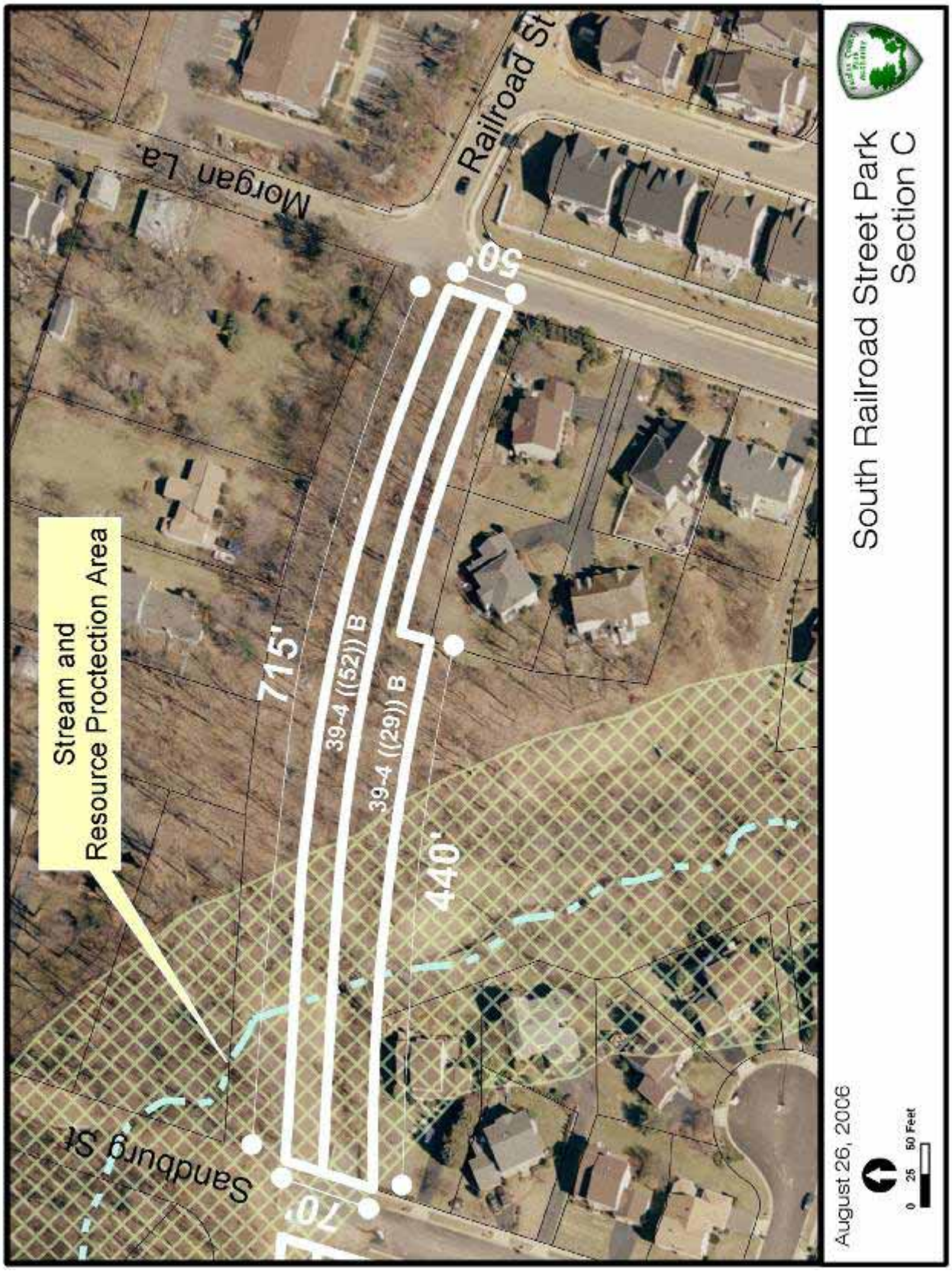

Figure 10: Parcel Section C Map

II. Existing Conditions

On April 20, 2006, the Park Authority held a community meeting to initiate the park planning process and to solicit community desires. The information gathered at the session was used in combination with site analysis research to develop design alternatives for park use and development. A draft master plan was developed based on public input provided throughout the process as well as local park and recreation needs. A public hearing was held on July 24, 2006, followed by a 30-day public comment period. The plan was revised following the public hearing and was approved by the Park Authority Board on September 27, 2006.

A. Setting and Condition of Adjacent Properties

The site is located in the Providence Supervisory District along Railroad Street between Gallows Road and Morgan Lane. The area surrounding the park is primarily single-family residential, including the adjacent properties. Towards the south are Chatham Square, Sandburg Ridge, Kings Glen subdivisions and other individual houses. On the north side are Regal Oaks, Brazil Properties, Leigh Woods subdivisions and other individual houses. Commercial, office, and retail uses are found at the intersection of Gallows Road and Railroad Street. Railroad Street provides pedestrian access from these uses to the park site.

Figure 11: Neighborhood street signs

For planning purposes, the site is divided into three sections (see *Figure 6 – Parcel Sections Map* on page 7) based on the platted streets that divide the park. Section A is between Gallows Road and 4th Place (see *Figure 7 – Parcel Section A Map* on page 8). This section is a narrow strip of wooded land is approximately 545′ x 30′ in size. A private asphalt driveway serving one house cuts across this section just west of parcel 39-4((52)) D. While the platted streets show Arden Street as intersecting South Railroad Street, there are no plans to change the current configuration (see *Figure 12 – Edge of Pavement Map* on page 13). The southern part of Arden Street will continue to terminate in a cul-de-sac before reaching South Railroad Street. The Park Authority does not have property rights across the Virginia Department of Transportation right-of-way at Arden Street, resulting in what looks like a disconnection between the two parcels in Section A. This issue will be further addressed later in the Design Concerns section.

Section B is between 4th Place and Sandburg Street (see *Figure 8 – Parcel Section B Map* on page 9). At an average of seventy feet, this is widest strip of land in the park. Vegetation in this section is generally a mix of grass, shrubs, and young trees. There is an existing concrete sidewalk on this section. A City of Falls Church water line parallels the northern portion of this section. A storm sewer line also runs horizontally through this section (see *Figure 9 – Existing Conditions Map* on page 10).

Section C is between Sandburg Street and Morgan Lane (see *Figure 10 – Parcel Section C Map*

on page 11). Significant cultural resources are noticeable in this section including the best remnants of the former railroad bed. A stream and associated Resource Protection Area (RPA) cuts through the eastern side of this section.

Figure 12: Edge of Pavement Map

B. Existing & Planned Land Use, Zoning

In the County's Comprehensive Plan, the site is located in the Cedar Community Planning Sector of the Vienna Planning District. This portion of the planning sector is planned for residential use at a density of 3-4 dwelling units per acre. The existing land use onsite and in the surrounding area is in accordance with the County Comprehensive Plan. While the park site remains undeveloped, the surrounding properties are developed with single family detached residences.

Principal park and recreation guidelines for the Planning District and Sector include:

- Acquire and develop at least three additional Community Parks to address deficiencies of active recreation facilities.
- Plan and develop stream valley trails to facilitate non-vehicular travel.
- Preserve and protect significant natural and heritage resources.
- Additional Neighborhood Park facilities in this sector should be provided in conjunction with new development.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of placing local parks within the residential communities they serve. The site parcels are zoned in three different zoning districts PDH-4, R-C and R-4, all of which allow public park use.

Virginia land use law requires that public and utility uses demonstrate compliance with the local comprehensive land use plan in terms of location, character, and extent. The process is commonly referred to as a "2232 Permit" consistent with the Code of Virginia §15.2-2232. Typically, park uses require a 2232 Permit prior to opening to the public. Following adoption of this park master plan, the Park Authority will apply for 2232-Permit approval from the County Planning Commission.

C. Natural Resources

South Railroad Street Park is greatly modified as a result of human disturbance. Soils, topography, water and vegetation have all been highly altered.

Figure 13: Typical vegetation in the neighborhood

1. Topography and Slopes

Slopes on this site have been altered as a result of road, railroad, and utility construction. For the most part the parcel has a gentle slope from west to east. A stream channel in Section C runs through a culvert under several feet of fill that supports the railroad bed. The grade cut of the railroad bed in the eastern end of the property (Section C) creates a long ravine with steep sides. The western end of the property (Section A and Section B) has slopes generally between 2-7%.

2. Soils and Geology

The County soils map is not highly accurate for this site because of the scale of the soil mapping compared to the size of the park and the significant alterations to the landscape since the soil map was created. Soil types vary through the site from west to east and include the following soil types:

- Mixed Alluvial

- Worsham
- Glenville
- Beltsville
- Fairfax Gravelly Silt Loam

All soil types are characterized by high gravel content and are predicted to have poor to marginal drainage.

Soil compaction has likely lowered the ability for the soils to drain. Section A of the property is dominated by the Beltsville soil-type. Section B of the property has Glenville-type soils, the most common soil type in the county. Section C of the property is dominated by Fairfax gravelly silt loam, which is typically found in upland areas of the county. The soils associated with a stream or waterway may still be present on the site, however as a result of the topography being altered and the stream running through a culvert, are probably not relevant for the purposes of the master plan.

Figure 14: Walking along the trail

3. Green Infrastructure Statement

The Fairfax County Park Authority has developed a modeling tool to help identify significant natural and cultural resources in the County. Using the County's geographic information system (GIS), the Park Authority has produced a countywide "Green Infrastructure" model and resultant map based on a weighted analysis of significant environmental and historic features.

The weighted analysis produces a general resource value that recognizes the combination in value of various resources within the three general categories of environmental, cultural, and open space areas, but does not rank importance between categories. The model is limited by the extent, accuracy, and resolution of the source data used. Several important resources, such as rare, threatened, and endangered species and Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) are not considered in the analysis due to the unavailability or incompatibility of the data.

The Green Infrastructure Map indicates that compared to other parcels in the County, the South Railroad Street Park has a low to moderate combination of natural and cultural resource values. Since the purpose of the Green Infrastructure Model is largely to rank properties based on a combination of different resources, one can not assume the absence of a single specific resource based on a "minimum," "low," or "medium" Green Infrastructure rating.

4. Vegetation and Wildlife

The vegetation of the park also reflects a highly disturbed landscape. Section A of the park has many species that were most likely planted (including Pine and English Ivy). There is some indication that the soils have poor drainage in this area. Section B of the park is mostly grass and disturbance-tolerant species such as Locust. Section C of the park has a vegetative community more typical of a Chestnut Oak forest.

Invasive Vegetative Community

The vegetation of the park includes many species that are not native to our region. This is a typical condition for parks in Fairfax County due to a high level of previous human activity. Some of these plant species are considered to be invasive. Invasive species are linked to measurable negative effects in the quality and functioning of the native landscape. These species may decrease wildlife, native plant diversity and/or the health of the ecosystem.

Figure 15: Invasive plants crowd out the native population for light, water and nutrients

Many invasive non-native species are present throughout the site and are cause for concern. The most prevalent of these are Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria officinalis*), wisteria (*Wisteria* sp.) and rubus (*Rubus phoenicolasius*). Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineus*) was not observed, but is likely a component of the invasive plant species community present on the site.

Native Vegetative Community

As with the topography and soils, the vegetation changes from the western to eastern parts of the property. The western portion of Section A is mostly planted vegetation, pines and English ivy. The eastern portion of Section A and Section B has a vegetative community that is dominated by Common Locust, a clonal species which is found in disturbed areas. It is native, but can be quite aggressive. There are some Chestnut Oaks in this area, as well as several invasive species. Much of this area is maintained as turf grass. Significantly, there appears to be a Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.). It is not known whether it was planted or is a remnant.

In Section C, the vegetative community is dominated by Chestnut Oak, Red Maple and Black Cherry. The most similar Society of American Foresters (SAF) Community is Chestnut Oak (44), however it is mostly transitional, and these characteristics listed in the typical SAF community only apply towards the Chestnut Oak species within the site's community. There are several native understory species including Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocisus* sp.), Greenbriar (*Smilax* sp.) and Pink Azalea (*Rhododendron* sp.). The forest stand in this area is rated as good.

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Plant and Animal Species

The Virginia Natural Heritage program's data was searched for rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals. The predicted range of two plant species were shown to overlap with the parcels that make up this property. Both species are listed as having a historic occurrence, meaning that they have not been observed in more than 20 years. The Park Authority did not perform a specific search for these species. No appropriate habitat type was found for the plant species while performing the field work.

Figure 16: The park will provide a habitat for many species

Wildlife Community

The park is of a size and shape that is not conducive to a large and diverse wildlife community. Although residents report seeing fox, the animal is most likely not a resident on park land. Most significant is probably the bird life. The narrow strip of shrubs and trees mimics a hedgerow habitat, and could be enhanced with native vegetation that would offer additional food and shelter for the bird community.

D. Cultural Resources

Due to its proximity to Washington, D.C., a web of trolley and electric rail lines were built that ran from points within the City across bridges and off into the farmland of Arlington and Fairfax Counties. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mode of transportation was trolley transport that offered the public a quicker, safer and more commodious form of travel. What was once a harsh journey to towns and cities was then easier. The trolley was used to commute to work, visit friends and relatives, or for recreating at natural wonders in Fairfax County and beyond.

Figure 17: An electric train

By the end of the trolley era in the 1940s, the trolleys or electric railroads as they were often called, were essential in the creation of commuter suburbanization of Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fairfax City and other municipalities within Northern Virginia.

A trolley line to a town often brought with it greater prosperity as commodities were capable of reaching markets in Alexandria and Washington, D.C. quicker, cheaper and with foods fresher for transport to additional markets north and south. At the peak in the 1940s, trolley lines ran between Rosslyn and Arlington Junction (which is today Ronald Reagan National Airport) out to Mt. Vernon, Fairfax, Nauck and from Georgetown to Falls Church, Fairfax City, and eventually to Bluemont via Leesburg.

The start-up of the line in 1892 was called the Washington & Arlington. It began as a horsecar line with tracks from Rosslyn up the hill to Fort Myer. In late 1895, the line was electrified. The Fairfax Line, which was built by the Washington & Falls Church railroad in 1906, already had had one name change and a change in ownership. The complexity of ownership of the lines is impressive. Companies rose, merged and were changed again. In any one year, branches or

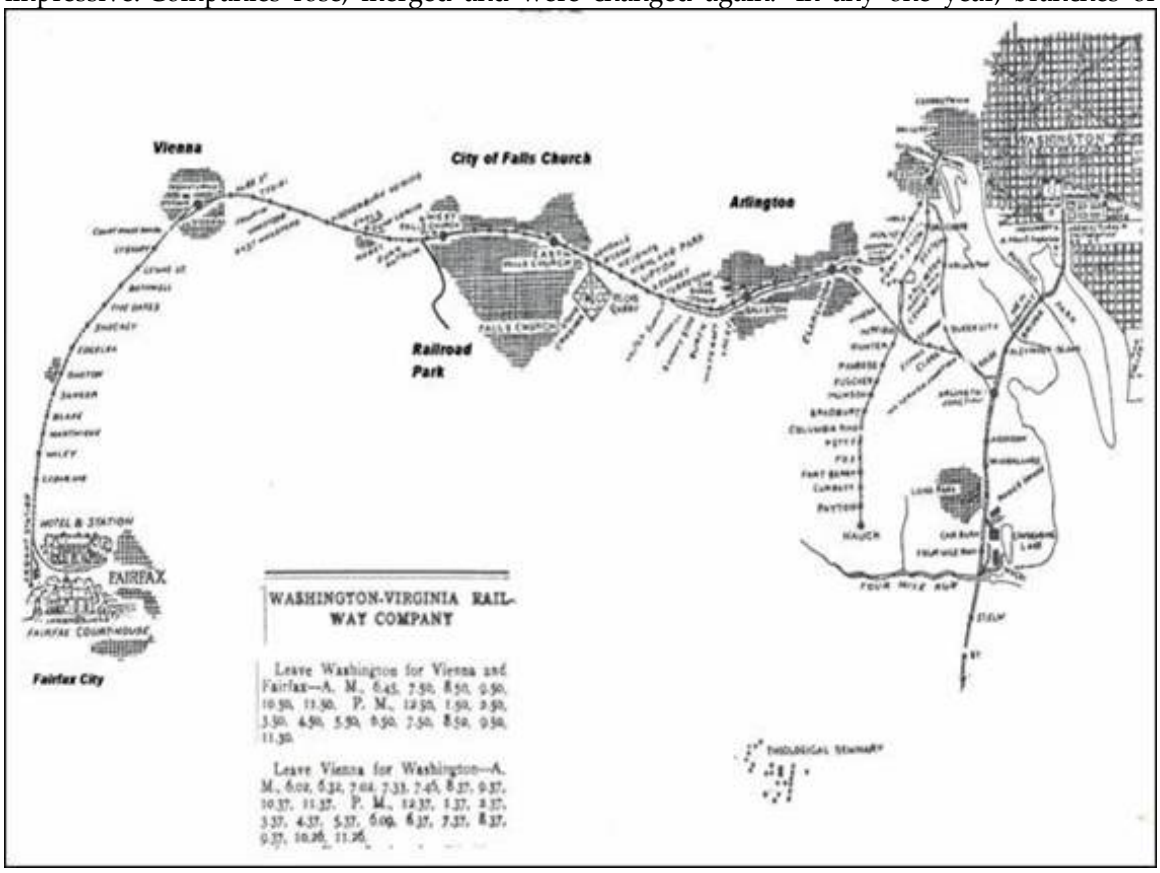

Figure 18: A map of the electric train line

spurs were built and shut down. At its end, in 1939, it was known as the Arlington & Fairfax Auto Railroad owned by a conglomerate called the Washington–Virginia Railway Company.

The Fairfax Line is represented in Fairfax County in South Railroad Street Park as a deep cut or trench running approximately 800 to 1000 feet in length in Section C of the park. A five degree slope or less was always maintained due to the trolley's underpowered engine, which affected its potential to stop and caused it to slide backwards. The existence of the former rail line helps to explain the remnants of cuts and bridges built along its path (see *Figure 20 – The trolley cut…* on page 20).

The Fairfax Trolley line and other electric lines in Northern Virginia have a unique place in history. By the end of the trolley era in the 1940s when cars and buses replaced them, the trolleys or electric railroads were the forefront of the creation of the first commuter class leading to the suburbanization of Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fairfax City and other towns and cities within Northern Virginia. They were an important technological invention causing startling innovations to fit the new world view that included the concept of commuting and all that infers.

Because of the contributions to transportation, technology, class formation and economic change, trolley lines are a significant cultural resource where ever they may be found. Presently, the only documented location in Fairfax County is the South Railroad Street Park, owned and managed by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The integrity of this portion of rail line is good with the exception of erosion causing some damage and private construction encroaching upon the historic feature.

Uniqueness, significance, scarcity and integrity are the four main proponents in placing a site on the National Register of Historic Places. As part of a quickly-disappearing landscape, the Fairfax Line of the Washington, Arlington & Falls Church Railway possesses these tenets. The development of the park will be planned to not negatively affect the remnants of the trolley line, which will serve as a protected piece of the rich history in this area.

The probable eligibility of the South Railroad Street Park trolley line for inclusion in National Register of Historic Places creates a responsibility for the Fairfax County Park Authority and visitors to protect this cultural resource for the benefit of present and future citizens to enjoy.

Figure 19: Electric train line advertisement

A Native American site has also been found. It consists of a light scatter of quartz flakes, shatter and one scraper. The site is located on the first terrace above the creek and is believed to be part of a larger site (44FX451) now destroyed by a housing development. The larger site was excavated and the information obtained. It was found to be 7,000 years before the present time (BP). Since the data was collected on the larger site, avoidance of this edge is not necessary. However, because of its location it is not likely to be destroyed.

On a recent site reconnaissance, archaeologists found no significant features to suggest need for further archaeological investigations. Historically, this site was farmed but no remnant structures appear to have been located on this site. There is a high level of disturbance from recent human activity including dumping of yard debris, clearing, digging holes, litter and play forts.

Figure 20: The trolley cut showing erosion and a path with a 15' – 20' depth

E. Park Access

There are many existing pedestrian points of access from all adjacent roads including Railroad Street, Arden Road, 4th Place, Sandburg Street and Morgan Lane. There is an existing concrete sidewalk along Section B of the site. Due to the linear and parceled nature of the park, pedestrian access is ample. There currently is no vehicular entrance to the site and none is necessary considering the size of the park and localized service area.

F. Existing Facilities

Besides a small section of sidewalk in Section B, there are no existing structures or facilities on the site. This structure should remain in place and be incorporated into the planned trail system through the park.

G. Utilities

The surrounding area is primarily developed with residential uses. As a result, utilities are available. A sewer line runs along Railroad Street north of the site. Water service is available from the City of Falls Church. The water lines are located along Railroad Street and within Section B and Section C of the site. Electricity and telephone service are readily available.

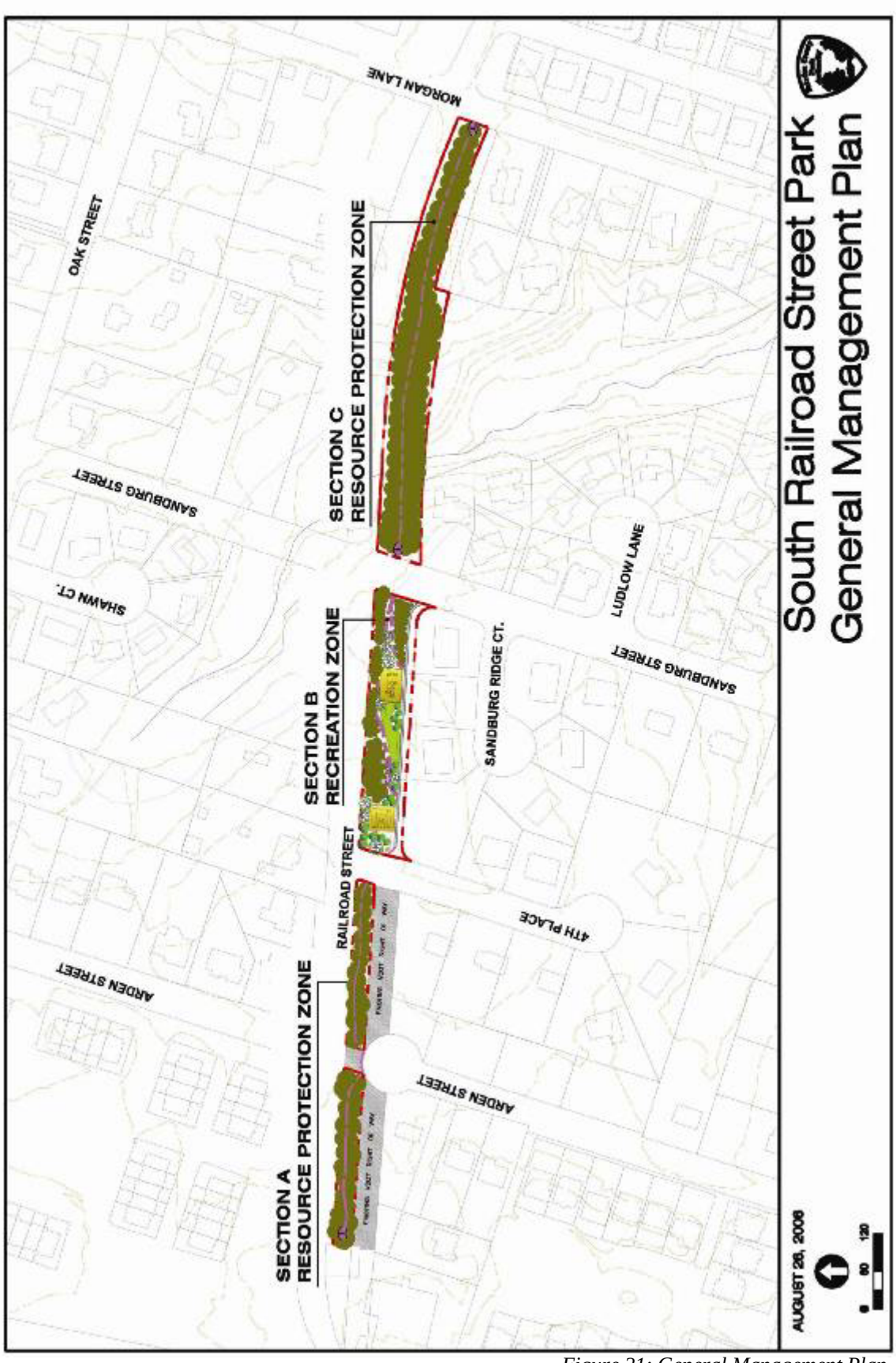

Figure 21: General Management Plan

Part Two: General Management Plan

I. Introduction

The General Management Plan (GMP) is intended to be a long-range document establishing and articulating a management framework and philosophy for problem solving, allowing for proactive decision making for park planning and development (see Figure 21 – General Management Plan on page 21). The GMP clearly defines the direction for resource preservation, management, and development, as well as visitor experience.

II. Management & Development

A. Visitor Profile & Desired Visitor Experience.

South Railroad Street Park is envisioned to draw users from the adjacent neighborhoods. The intention is to create a park that offers active and passive recreation opportunities for a wide-range of users. This includes children and families who want to use the playground, as well as individuals interested in a walk through the woods. Through interpretative displays, visitors learn about the history of trolley lines and how they served the larger community. A typical visitation duration would be in the thirty minute to one-hour timeframe.

B. Natural Resource Management.

The existing conditions of the park reflect the lack of natural resource management. The development of the park should avoid or minimize any further negative impact to the natural resources, and future action may be taken to remove non-native, invasive species and/or supplement the existing native vegetation. Natural resource management in the park should be cognizant of the significant cultural features, and should in no way harm these resources.

In a local park like this one, natural resource stewardship should be encouraged by providing information to the park neighborhoods about the value of natural resources through:

- identification of native and invasive species of vegetation
- maintaining healthy streams
- creating ideal habitats for native fauna

Regulatory and interpretive signage may be considered to reduce dumping, off-trail access, and incompatible landscaping.

Figure 22: Native vegetation should be encouraged

C. Cultural Resource Management.

The park site contains significant and unique cultural resources. The primary goal is to protect, enhance, and interpret these resources. Development of the park should avoid negative impacts on the former electric train line and associated features.

Cultural interpretation will be provided on site by a combination of signs, panels, markers and/or sculptural elements designed to interpret the resources for park users.

D. Site Amenities & Visitor Services.

This is a local park where visitation times are expected to be in the range of one hour. As such, the park will be unstaffed and not include any major service facilities. An orientation area/kiosk should be sited adjacent to Section B to provide general information about park and recreational opportunities at the site. Other visitor amenities may include benches, picnic tables, and interpretative signage for natural and cultural resource education.

Figure 23: Interpretive signage

E. Site Considerations.

The Park Authority's area maintenance crew will provide periodic maintenance to the site. Interior to the site itself, there are no significant issues constraining its use as a park. There are moderate slopes (generally less than 7 percent) that may require grading for use of the site but these types of slopes are routinely engineered as necessary. A second minor issue is unauthorized paths that provide direct access from the adjacent residential developments. The paths have resulted in damage to the existing vegetation as well as provided a point of access for illegal dumping.

Figure 24: Construction and its effects adjacent to the park

III. Management Framework

The management framework integrates research, site analysis, and basic data presented in this document. Management zones have been defined to provide a framework for site design and decision-making. Existing uses, existing conditions and recommendations from Park Authority staff were considered in the development of the management zones. The framework provides broad flexibility within a range of potential uses for each management zone. The General

Management Plan Map (see *Figure 21 – General Management Plan* on page 21) depicts the areas for each of the three management zones. These boundaries should not be interpreted as hard lines.

The "Potential Uses" stated for the zone describe acceptable uses for each zone. If a use is not listed for a zone, by its omission it is considered an incompatible use for that zone. The potential uses are intentionally general to allow flexibility when making decisions.

A. Resource Protection Zone

The Resource Protection Zone (RPZ) is located in Sections A and C of the park (see *Figure 21 – General Management Plan Map* on page 21). In Section C the primary focus is on protecting, enhancing and interpreting the existing cultural resources. In Section A, the focus is on preserving and enhancing native vegetation while providing passive recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities for the public. Potential uses for the Resource Protection Zone include interpretative signage and/or features to help create a cultural identity for the park, preservation of cultural resources, cultural exploration, trails, paths, benches, natural resource and habitat management, stream improvements, stormwater management (SWM) as necessary, and education.

B. Recreation Zone

The recreation zone is located in Section B and is intended to support the development of recreation facilities and amenities to provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. This zone consists of primarily open, non-treed areas but opportunities should be sought to minimize tree removal where appropriate. Potential uses for this zone may include a park sign and/or information kiosk, open play area, play court, playground, paths and trails, and visitor amenities such as picnic tables, seating, and trash cans.

Figure 25: The playground should be for children of all ages

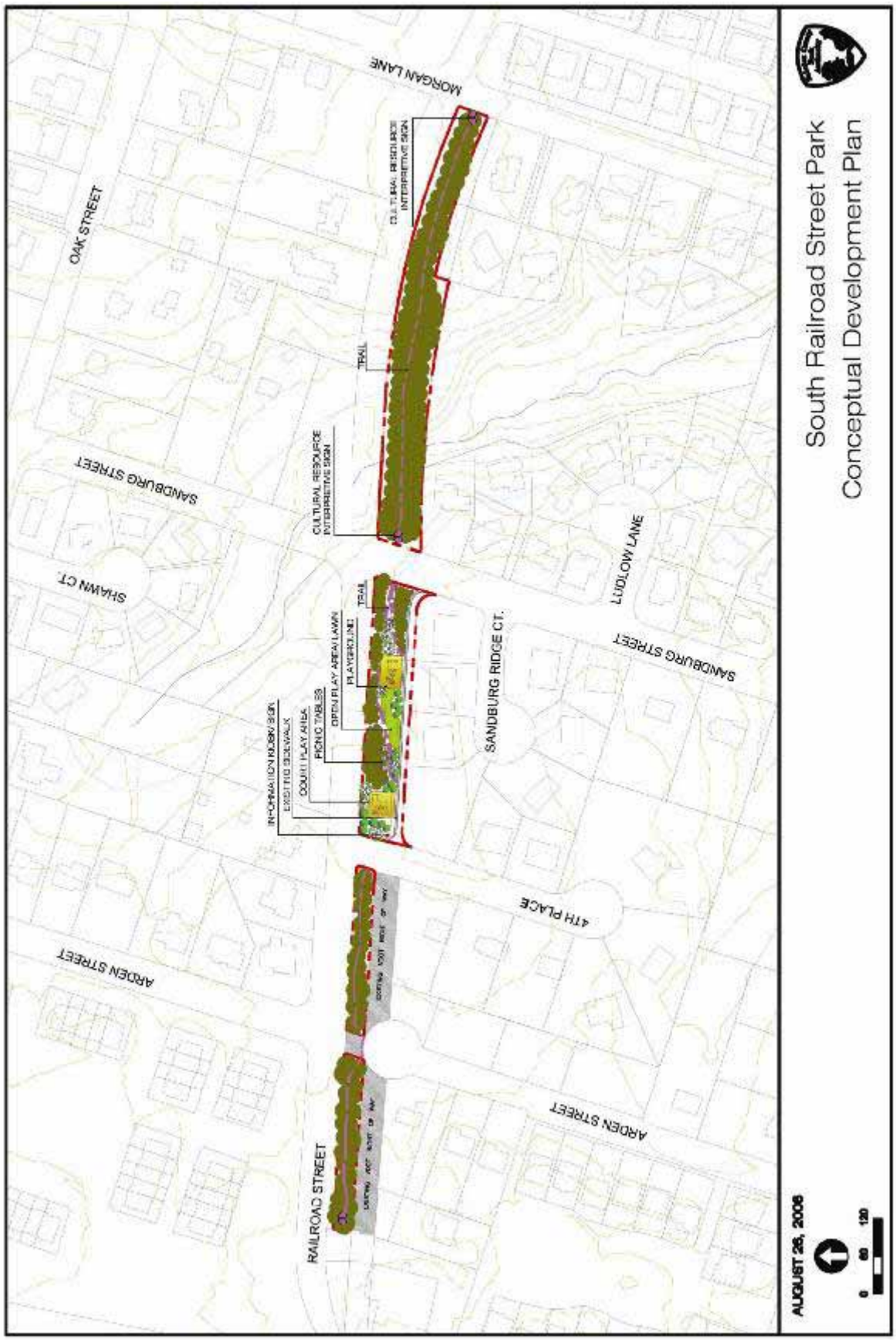

Figure 26: Conceptual Development Plan

Figure 27: Conceptual Development Plan, Section A

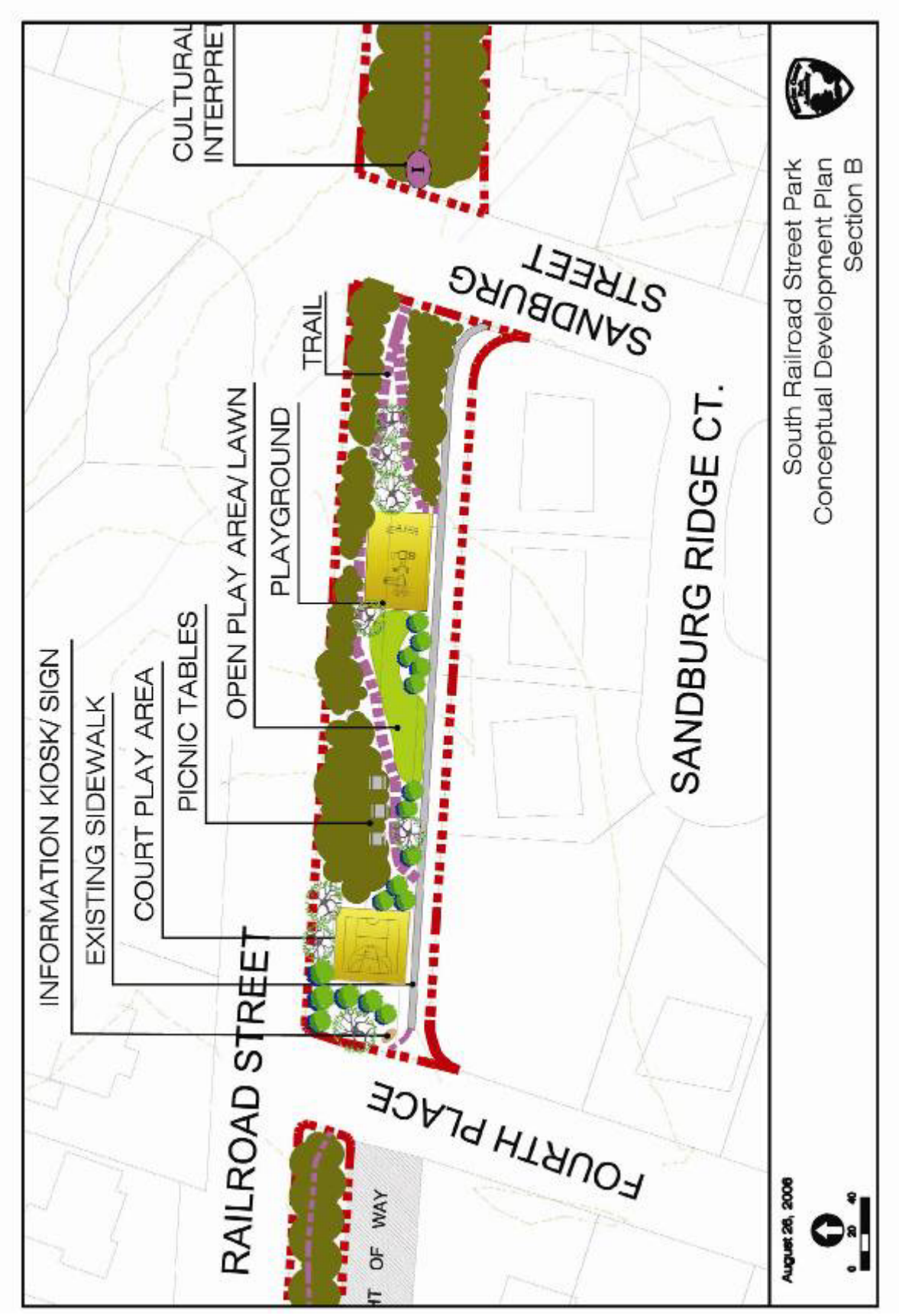

Figure 28: Conceptual Development Plan, Section B

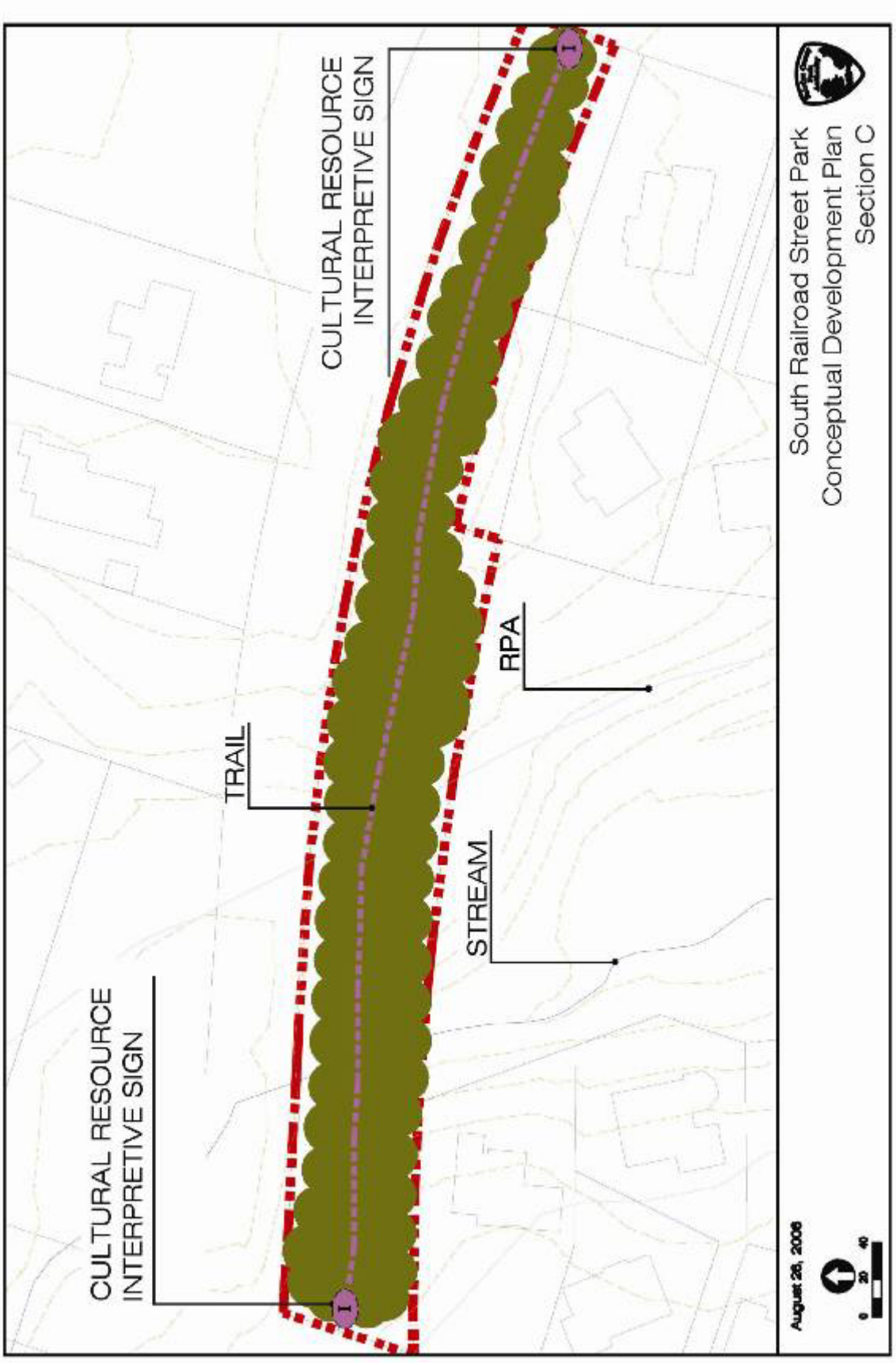

Figure 29: Conceptual Development Plan, Section C

Part Three: Conceptual Development Plan

I. Introduction

The Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) describes the planned park elements; identifies design concerns; and illustrates the general location of the recommended facilities (see *Figures 26 - 29, Conceptual Development Plan Maps* on pages 25 - 28) based on the guidance of the General Management Plan.

II. Park Elements

A. Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access points will be along the park trail as it intersects the neighborhood streets, including Railroad Street, 4th Place, Sandburg Street, and Morgan Lane. There will also be access along the concrete sidewalk in Section B of the park. The pedestrian entrance at Sandburg Street should be improved to connect the existing sidewalk in the park to the balance of the park trail system.

Figure 30: Pedestrian access may use both natural and paved surfaces

B. Trails

A key experience at South Railroad Street Park will be enjoying the use of the trail that will run the length of the park. A trail is proposed to run from the western end to the eastern end of this linear park. Connections to this trail will be provided from all the intersecting public roads (Railroad Street, 4th Place, Sandburg Street, and Morgan Lane). Expressed user preference is for a natural surface trail to minimize the perceived impact on natural and cultural resources within the park. However, this does not preclude continued use of the existing concrete sidewalk, nor does it remove the possibility of adding a stabilizing surface such as stonedust or asphalt on sections of the trail as needed to prevent erosion and to provide accessibility.

The trail is necessary to ensure connectivity between all sections of the park and surrounding neighborhoods. Benches should be provided at key locations along the trail. Interpretive signs, as discussed below, should also be installed to interpret the history and to provide education for trail users. Directional signs may also be provided, following Park Authority guidelines. To the greatest extent possible, the trail should be ADA accessible if not prohibited by existing slopes.

C. Interpretive Signs

Interpretative signs should be placed near access points on the walking trail in Section C near both ends of the section (Sandburg Street and Morgan Lane). The historic displays could be as simple as individual signs or more creative sculptural elements in the park. The interpretative signs should be designed within the framework of existing Resource Management Division and Park Operations guidelines for interpretive trail signs. The interpretative signs should include the trolley line map, photographs, and/or how the trolley line served the mass transportation and economic development of Fairfax County and other nearby areas, and photography and/or a narrative regarding the Dunn Loring Station located at the corner of Gallows Road and South Railroad Street. The interpretive signs should be instrumental in developing an identity for the park to distinguish it from other parks in the area.

C. Picnic Tables

A few accessible picnic tables should be located in Section B between the court play area and the playground to provide a central location for relaxation, a meal in the shade, or for parents to monitor children. At least two picnic tables of a size and scale appropriate for a local park should be included to accommodate a small group and family-oriented activities.

Figure 31: Accessible site furnishings should be used

D. Playground

One of the primary attractions of this park will be a playground area. This area is meant to appeal to children's play needs. The opportunity for a variety of experiences will be supported in this playground. The key components of this area should include traditional playground equipment such as slides, climbers, etc and trolley-like play equipment signifying the cultural resource. The playground should be accessible. The equipment should encourage the development of physical, social, and cognitive skills by offering a variety of surfaces, textures, colors, and changes in level of difficulty. Permanent resilient ground surfacing should be installed to ensure safety and accessibility for all users. Pervious surfaces should be used where

Figure 32: Future playground site

accessibility is not an issue to minimize potential runoff and erosion problems.

E. Multi-Purpose Court

A small multi-purpose court integrated into the design of the recreation area will promote skills practice for basketball players as well as a hard surface for games such as hopscotch or 4-square. The area should be a paved half-court with a single basketball goal. This area should not be lighted. It should be located to minimize site grading and to preserve as much of the existing trees as possible. Areas of tree removal for grading outside of the court play area should be replanted elsewhere using native trees and understory plants.

Figure 33: The multi-purpose court can be used for many different games

F. Visitor Amenities

The park may provide a few, simple visitor amenities/comfort features. While not all of these features are specifically identified on the CDP, the park may include minor comfort amenities such as park usage signs, park benches/seating areas, trashcans, and/or a drinking fountain.

III. Design Concerns

Having multiple activities grouped closely together due to the linear nature of the park site will bring design challenges. These challenges can be addressed by ensuring a flow of movement within and between the elements, providing well-defined areas for each use, and creating and maintaining appropriate landscaping. The positive result of concentrating active recreational activities together will be to make this park exciting for visitors while minimizing negative impacts on the resource protection zones within the park.

A. Landscape Design and Site Furnishings

The entire recreation area should be an integrated, visually pleasing whole. Attractive, coordinated colors and materials should be used for picnic tables, play equipment, and site furnishings. This will tie the elements of the park's structured activity area together. There may be seating at the edge of the playground, open area, or the court play area, to help define the area and provide places to observe and rest. The park elements and facilities should be accessible to the greatest extent possible.

B. Utility Easements

Additional precaution should be taken not to disturb the existing onsite utility lines such as the water and storm water lines. This will be an especially critical detail when siting and designing the playground, trails and multi-purpose court areas to be created in Section B of the park. Ultimately, the exact location of these utilities should be the most important site feature to consider when determining locations of the recreation elements. Certain uses are acceptable on these utility easements, which include:

- siting of the playground fall zone
- siting parts of the trail that are not feasible on other areas of the site

Unacceptable uses on the easements include:

- siting of playground equipment
- siting of the multi-purpose court
- siting of the entire length of the trail when other areas are more feasible for its location

Areas without pavement, facilities or trails in Section A and Section B of the park should be re-vegetated to the extent practicable. This planting can be coordinated with the stormwater management design, and should include the use of native plants to this bioregion. The stream and associated Chesapeake Bay Regional Protection Area should be improved through provision of appropriate native plantings while being careful not to disturb significant cultural features.

C. Trails and Street Crossings

Section A will pose a design challenge with regard to providing an adequate trail. It is recommended that an existing sidewalk along the Arden Street cul-de-sac be used as a tie-in for traversing that area of Section A. Trail location should avoid high quality trees in this section.

Safe pedestrian crossings between sections of the park should be provided. These critical intersections occur at Fourth Place and Sandburg Street, with potential foot traffic also entering the park from the northern portion of Arden Street that intersects South Railroad Street. Proper signage to alert drivers of children at play in the park should also be provided. These components are critical to the safety and well-being of all who visit South Railroad Street. While the vehicular traffic in the neighborhood is typical of a subdivision, careful consideration of pedestrian movement should be addressed when siting the trail and its street crossings.